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C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 001439

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF/SPG
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/11/2012
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [MOPS](#) [KPKO](#) [UN](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)
SUBJECT: VIOLENCE IN HASKANITA LINKED TO ATTACK IN KORDOFAN

REF: KHARTOUM 01389

Classified By: CDA Alberto Fernandez, Reason: Sections 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) A Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) attack near Haskanita, South Darfur on September 9, which had included aerial bombardment, was in direct response to the August 30 rebel incursion into Kordofan led by the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) and the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA)-Unity (reftel). The most recent attack affected 13 villages east of Haskanita and resulted in between one and three civilian deaths and 13 injuries, according to an AU official. The UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), however, reported 25 potential civilian casualties. It seems clear that the targets were military objectives associated with JEM/SLA-Unity rebel units.

12. (C) JEM and SLA-Unity later launched a counter-attack from a stronghold North of Haskanita. Based on a discussion with the JEM commander who led the attack, a UN official told Poloff on September 11 that JEM had supposedly destroyed 15 SAF vehicles, captured seven vehicles, and taken seven SAF soldiers hostage. Seven rebels were killed and 25 injured. JEM issued a statement on its website on September 11 claiming that it had shot down two SAF helicopters. The statement was removed from the website later that day, and Post has been unable to confirm the allegation. The SAF denied any major losses.

13. (C) Comment: As anticipated in reftel, the SAF launched what it will no doubt describe as a necessary action to ensure security following the JEM/SLA-Unity attack in Kordofan. JEM's involvement is a bid by its leader, Khalil Ibrahim, to shore up his military prowess after Bahar Abu Gharda (who led the JEM delegation during the UN/AU-sponsored Arusha talks) and primary commander Abdallah Banda defected from the movement, taking many of JEM's forces with them. Continued Government-rebel violence is a disturbing trend in advance of the UN/AU-sponsored peace talks in Libya to begin October 27. With the rainy season ending in October, AMIS troops beginning their rotation, and JEM rebel attacks outside Darfur provoking SAF responses, the possibility for a violent next few weeks is high. End comment.

14. (U) Tripoli minimize considered.
FERNANDEZ